(b) if so, the number of places/reserves along the border where criminals have intensified their nefarious activities;

(c) whether cooperation of international organisations and State Governments has also been sought to check illegal activity; and

(d) if so, their response and results in this regard;

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are several vulnerable areas along the Indo-Nepal border from where cases of illegal wildlife trade are reported. These include : Dharchula, Pithoragarh, Tanakpur, Lakhimpur Kheri, Bahraich, Bhairawa, Valmiki Tiger Reserve, Raxaul, Kakarbhitta, Darjeeling, Siliguri and Kharibari.

(c) and (d) Representatives of the State Govemment of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal were part of the Indian delegation which participated in the consultative meeting at Kathmandu and they have resolved to take cooperative action to control the illegal activities. Cooperation of international organisations and other countries has also been sought as market centres for the illegally traded products are mainly in those countries.

United Nations Environment Programme Report on desertification in India

49. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA, M.P: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is reported in newspapers that a study conducted by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on its Global Environment Outlook (GEO) report revealed that India is going to suffer much from desertification and will become a water scarce country in 2025;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to prevent such situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) The Global Environment Outlook 1997 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) states that India is among the countries projected to fall into the water stress category before 2025;

(b) and (c) Government have been taking various steps to protect, conserve and augment the coutry's water resources through various schemes such as Desert Development Programme (DDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP), Afforestation programmes etc.

IDA loan for Environmental Management

50. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether International Development Association (IDA) has approved a loan of 50 million dollars for environmental management, capacity building technical project to strengthen monitoring and compliance of laws and policies in this regard;

(b) whether there has been considerable deterioration in environmental level in water, air, and soil in India during the last decade; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to ensure proper utilisation of the above loan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (CAPT. JAI NARAIN PRASAD NISHAD): (a) to (c) An International Development Association Loan amounting to US$ 50 million has been negotiated with the World Bank for the "India: Environmental Management Capacity Building Technical Assistance Project". This project would address issues of environmental policy planning, better administration of Environmental Law and their compliance, de-centralisation of Environmental Management and monitoring of certain specific high priority problem areas.

The pressures on environment and the general deterioration in the environmental level in water, air and soil are linked to economic and developmental activities. More specifically the monitoring results show increase in